



**January 2012**



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Manager

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**Subscribe to Town News**



**Receive Important Town  
Notices and Information**  
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**New Voters:**  
**Deadline to register to  
vote in the March 6  
Primary Election is  
February 16.**  
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**Become Involved in  
Local Government:**  
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**ServSafe Training  
Scheduled**  
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**Warrant closes Tuesday  
January 24 at 2 pm.**

**Watch Meetings Online**

**westford**  
*CAT*

[www.westfordcat.org](http://www.westfordcat.org)

**Dear Westford Residents,**

After the mildest December in recent history, more typical New England winter temperatures returned over the weekend. Although spring seems far away, we are busy preparing the warrant for our annual town meeting on Saturday, March 24, 2012. The Board of Selectmen will conduct a preliminary review of the draft warrant at their next meeting on January 24th, and then invite the proponents of the articles to subsequent meetings in February and March, to explain article requests. The board will be closing the warrant at their next meeting (on the 24th), and all citizen petitions are due in by 2 p.m. that day.

As they do annually, the Board of Selectmen voted to establish their 2012 goals for the town, which you may review at: [2012 BoS/TM Goals](#)

The town has continued to investigate why National Grid took nearly seven days to restore our town's power following the October 29th snowstorm. I attended an investigative hearing held by the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (DPU) and provided the DPU with comments from selectmen, staff and, our residents. These concerns were also addressed in a letter to the DPU, which you may read at: [Letter to DPU](#). The selectmen charged the Energy Committee with examining what measures may be taken to prevent future long-term power outages, and exploring the possibility of switching electricity providers. The committee held a meeting on December 19th with National Grid officials, where National Grid attempted to defend their actions, but also committed to improvements in tree trimming, infrastructure repairs, and preparation for and response to future events.

Patrick Mehr, a representative of Massachusetts Alliance for Municipal Electric Choice, is attending the Board of Selectmen's February 14th meeting to discuss the Muni Choice Bill H869, which would allow cities and towns to form new municipal utilities, thereby ending the monopoly National Grid and NStar now enjoy (our State Representative Jim Arciero is supportive of this bill).

Congratulations to the fire department for being awarded a grant in the amount \$42,840 which will be used to install a diesel exhaust system at the Center Fire Station. Funds for this purpose were already being budgeted in capital for FY13, so this grant will allow us to seek funding to offset a new ambulance instead.

Congratulations also to the staff at the J.V. Fletcher Library, who were awarded a gift of \$3,000 from ARISA, Inc. to be used to purchase science fiction and fantasy titles for the young adults' and children's collections in the library.

I am pleased to announce two newly hired employees – Mike Wells, our new IT Director, who joins us following 10 years as IT Director in Gloucester, and Janet Berube, a former town employee who has returned to work in the town clerk and town manager's offices.

My best wishes to each of you for a happy, healthy new year.

Sincerely,

## Town Clerk's News

### IMPORTANT NOTICE TO VOTERS

YOUR VOTING PRECINCT MAY HAVE CHANGED based on the 2010 Federal and State Census redistricting 390 households were redistricted. These households will be notified by mail as to their new voting precincts. Your precinct number will also be located on the upper right hand corner of your census form, to be mailed out shortly.

Precincts	Voting Locations
1 & 3	Abbot School, 25 Depot Street
2	Blanchard School, 14 West Street
4	Robinson School, 60 Concord Road
5	Stony Brook School, 7 Farmer's Way
6	Miller School, 1 Mitchell Way



### Voting in 2012

Are you a registered voter? Verify your status online at [www.westfordma.gov/voter](http://www.westfordma.gov/voter).

Call us or drop by for a voter registration form if you need to register or change your party. Absentee ballots are typically available three weeks prior to an election.

Contact the Town Clerk's office for more information.

### Open Positions for Local Office in 2012

The table below lists open seats for the May 1, 2012, Town Election. Nomination papers are now available from the Town Clerk's Office for those who are interested in running for office.

The deadline to file nomination papers bearing the signatures of at least 50 Westford voters is Tuesday, March 13 at 5:00pm. For a list of Committee vacancies please visit:

<https://data.westfordma.gov/bc/> or the Town Clerk's Office.

Office	Number of Terms Expiring	Length of Term(s)
Selectmen	1	3 years
Board of Health	1	3 years
Housing Authority	1	5 years
Library Trustees	2	3 years
Planning Board	1	5 years
School Committee	3	3 years



## J. V. Fletcher Library News

### ENVISIONING THE LIBRARY'S FUTURE...

The Board of Trustees of the J. V. Fletcher Library and the Library Management Task Force are embarking on the next state mandated Visioning and Planning Process to produce the J. V. Fletcher Library's five-year plan for 2014 - 2018. Through community survey results, Focus Groups, Community and Library Scans, and data collection and analysis - the ideas, desires, wishes and, hopes of the Westford community will be sought, sifted, and translated into new services, collections, genres, and outreach!

Looking back, here are some "new services" that grew out of the 2005 Visioning and Planning Process:

- **Downloadable Books and Music**
- **WiFi and Public Fax**
- **Enlarged Audio Book Collection**
- **Playaways**
- **BPL Foreign Language Collections**
- **"Mother Goose" Programs**
- **Library Café**
- **Saturday Drop-in Programs**
- **Chinese Foreign Language Collection**
- **Summer Saturdays**
- **New Logo and Branding**
- **New Rear Entrance**
- **In-house Laptops**
- **Five Phases of Library Beautification**
- **Revised Website**
- **New Furnishings throughout the Library**
- **Restoration of Historic Library Façade and Features**
- **Teens and 'Tweens Programs and Graphic Novels**
- **Quik Flix and Bestsellers**
- **NOOKS and KINDLES**
- **Improved Spaces and Lighting**

Be on the lookout for the Library's Community Survey, early in 2012, and help us craft your Library's future!

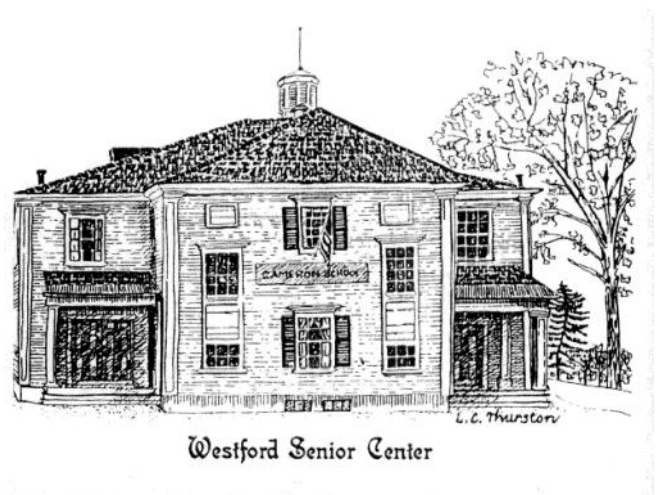
Thank You and Happy New Year!



## Cameron Senior Center News

The Council on Aging would like to wish everyone a safe and healthy new year. With our first complete year at the renovated and expanded Cameron Senior Center under our belts, in reflection we had a very successful year. Participation at Cameron activities was up 34% with the addition of several new offerings some of which are: matter of balance, crafts, fitness/strength training, genealogy, percussion, quilting, and Zumba. A support group for Caregivers of Patients with Alzheimer's and Related Dementia was formed along with vendor fairs, educational presentations, and wellness activities. The feedback was positive, and we have a suggestion box in the lobby that we encourage you to use.

Our senior population age 60 plus is now more than 3,700 residents. This year we are asking that all residents help us meet the needs of our mature population. We outreach to many homebound residents but believe that there are some who are unaware of our services or who do not want to ask for help. If you know of someone that could use our assistance in any area including transportation, Meals on Wheels, food pantry, medical equipment loan, companionship, fuel assistance, property tax relief, income tax preparation, Notary Public, food stamp applications, or with health insurance questions, please contact us at 978-692-5523. Better yet stop in and develop a friendship with an elder in your neighborhood and see if you can assist them in any way. They may need someone to put out their recycling, shovel and sand the walkway, provide a ride to the grocery store, replace a light bulb, remove an air conditioner from a window, mow the lawn, or offer some friendly conversation over a cup of coffee. You will be rewarded for your good deeds.



Are you aware that we produce a COA newsletter 10 times a year? This newsletter is mailed to all senior households unless they request electronic mail or ask to be removed from the list. Our newsletter is available online at [www.westfordma.gov/coa](http://www.westfordma.gov/coa). Are you willing to receive your monthly newsletter by email? We are looking to reduce our postage cost and this will help us. Contact [cfrance@westfordma.gov](mailto:cfrance@westfordma.gov) and let her know your name and address as it appears exactly on the newsletter label, and she will explain how to sign up on line.



## Health Department News

### ServSafe Food Safety Training Course

The Health Department is pleased to offer again a two-day ServSafe food safety training course on Wednesday, March 21 and Wednesday, March 28, 2012. ServSafe is nationally accredited, recognized and often required by State and Federal Food Code(s) depending on the nature and menu of a particular food event in Massachusetts. The course will be held on both nights from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at the Millennium School, 23 Depot Street, in the All Purpose Meeting Room, and will be made available for members and organizations of Westford's Community.

The cost to audit the lecture portion of the course is free for Westford residents, non-profits, members of local community organizations and food establishments; however the text books and answer exam sheets are \$70.00.

Space is limited to the first 35 applicants and is open to only one applicant per organization. All book fees must be received by the Health Department Office, located at Town Hall, 55 Main Street, no later than February 24, 2012.

Depending on space availability, the Health Department may open the course to more than one applicant per organization. At the time of registration please provide your name, the company or organization you are associated with, address, day time, and evening phone numbers, along with a valid email address.

To obtain more information, please call the Health Department Office at 978-692-5509.





## Water Department News

It's easy to take drinking water for granted. You turn on a faucet, and it comes out. This is understandable considering that most of the water system is underground and out of sight. However, most would agree that the availability of clean drinking water is critical not only to our existence, but also to maintaining an acceptable standard of living.

As we get older – things tend to wear down and break. The same is true for the massive system that provides our drinking water, and this can be costly. For example, the installed cost of one foot of water pipe is about \$240 - and many water systems in Massachusetts have thousands of feet of pipe that needs replacement. To plan for this need in Massachusetts, the Water Infrastructure Finance Commission (WIFC) was established by a 2009 act of the state legislature, Section 145 of Chapter 27 of the Acts of 2009. This Act charged the WIFC with developing a comprehensive, long range infrastructure finance plan for Massachusetts and municipalities.

To meet an estimated gap of \$21.4 billion over the next 20 years for drinking and clean water projects in Massachusetts (and an additional \$18 billion for proposed federal stormwater rules), the WIFC recently approved recommendations to improve the state's water system infrastructure. One of these recommendations is a proposed state surcharge of a tenth of a penny for every gallon of water used to create a fund that would redistribute money to municipalities for water projects. One tenth of a penny does not sound like much, but consider that Westford pumped more than 570,000,000 gallons of water in 2010. This surcharge would translate into a \$570,000 burden to the Westford Water Department customers. An early estimate is that revenues would need to increase between 11 and 15 percent to cover this expense should this proposal pass.

In addition to the increased cost, we foresee significant flaws with this surcharge, especially for communities like Westford that are proactive in their approach to water infrastructure needs. The Department's Water System Master Plan helps us to address the effects of both growth and aging. This plan forecasts future water use needs based on a growing population and business development. In addition, the Plan recommends and prioritizes future projects to address not only capacity growth but, also needed system improvements. In fact, the Department has several large infrastructure projects included on the upcoming March 2012 Town Meeting warrant. Simply put: Westford is responsibly investing in our water system infrastructure.

With the proposed surcharge system, we will be forced to request money from this fund along with other towns or cities that may not have invested in their systems as they should have. These other communities would be first in line for funding because their infrastructure needs would be greater.

The Westford Water Department has voiced our concerns about this proposal collectively through the Massachusetts Water Works Association.

More information about this proposed surcharge will become available on the Water Department website ([www.westfordma.gov/water](http://www.westfordma.gov/water)) as it develops.

## Town Planner Receives Award

In December, Town Planner Chris Kluchman AICP received a Distinguished Service Award from the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA-MA). She contributed a significant number of volunteer hours to the organization in 2011. The 2011 APA National Conference, which was attended by approximately 5,000 planners and related professionals from around the country, was held in Boston in April, and Chris served as the treasurer for the Local Host Committee. She was also the lead author of *Sustainable Neighborhood Road Design: A Guidebook for Massachusetts Cities and Towns*, published in May 2011, and co-sponsored by APA-MA and the Home Builders Association of Massachusetts. Chris has been an active contributor to APA-MA since 2005.

## Board of Assessors to Begin Annual Measure and List

In compliance with the Department of Revenue's certification regulations, the Westford Board of Assessors will begin conducting its annual Measure and List beginning January 1, 2012, continuing through the fall 2012. This Measure and List is part of the Fiscal Year 2013 Interim Revaluation with the Department of Revenue. Toward this end, the Westford Board of Assessors has contracted with an independent appraisal contractor to assist in this project. The parcels to be inspected will consist of properties with open Building permits, sales Verification, properties that have been identified for re-inspection, and properties that have not been inspected within the last 7-10 years. The purpose is to update the Assessors' records.

The time period for the inspections will be during weekdays, and/or evenings, and/or weekends. Any questions should be forwarded to the Westford Assessors Office at 978-692-5504.

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